DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 115 614 SP 009 683

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TITLE Attitudes of Prospective Teachers Toward the Culturally Different.
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Bias; Cultural Pluralism; *Disadvantaged Youth; Education Courses; Ethnic Groups; *Higher Education; Minority Groups; *Practicums; Preservice Education; *Social Discrimination; Student Attitudes; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether or not prospective elementary school teachers can become more positively oriented toward culturally different children after taking teacher education courses that focus on teaching these children. Two groups were taught two courses dealing with disadvantaged youngsters. Group A took the course during the summer and did not have any interaction with such children. Group B took the courses during two consecutive fall and winter quarters and worked with culturally different children. Students were administered questionnaires which dealt with their feelings about minority people both before and after the courses. Conclusions were that students taught courses about minorities without having real-life experience with them became more prejudiced. Students who worked with minority people became less prejudiced in general. Results indicated that practicum experiences of student teachers should include interaction with children not of the dominant culture if the teachers are to avoid looking down on them or expecting them to fail. This is particularly important because children often live up or down to the expectations of their teachers. (CD)

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# Attitudes of Prospective Teachers Toward the Culturally Different

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The attitude teachers have toward their pupils will affect the learning ability of these children. The more positive the pupils perceive their teachers' feelings toward them, the better their academic achievement (Davidson and Lang, 1960). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that the more positive teachers felt toward the learning potential of their pupils, the better the pupils achieved in the classroom. This self-fulfilling prophecy was described earlier by Whyte (1943) and Schmuck (1966) and was substantiated by Henrikson (1971). This positive regard for children in the classroom raises the pupils' self-concept and ultimately leads to better achievement (Brookover, Thomas and Patterson, 1964; Glasser, 1969; Rogers, 1969; and Scheuer, 1971).

Unfortunately, the teachers of the culturally different have been characterized as having a poor attitude toward these children and the teaching situation in general. Becker (1952) found that teachers in a large urban slum setting used poorer teaching techniques than did teachers in middle class schools. These slum teachers had a conflicting middle class value system which alienated their lower class students and these teachers expected less from their students than did suburban teachers. The central city teachers wanted to transfer to a "better" school as soon as possible. Wilkerson (1966) has observed that poor teaching and an unduly low estimate of their pupils' learning potential are common among the teachers of the culturally different and this influence leads directly to progressive deterioration in academic performance.

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While investigating the attitudes of middle class white pre-service teachers, Allen (1972) concluded that these college students accepted the stereotype of the Black as inferior and socially backward. Holt (1969) has summarized this prevalent point of view by accusing the schools of adapting a deliberate failure strategy where too many teachers have the conviction that the poor children in the cities cannot be taught.

If prejudice is a learned behavior (Allport, 1954) it can be hypothesized then that prospective teachers should also be able to learn to be less biased toward various culturally different groups. Stanley and Stanley (1970) found that college students who read short stories written by Black authors displayed greater openness toward Blacks than did a control group. The stereotypes and perceptions toward Blacks changed more for the experimental group. Harmon and Ingle (1970), using thirty-eight education juniors in a pretest-posttest designed study, split the students into two sections of an Educational Psychology course. One section tutored in suburban schools while the other tutored in urban, culturally different schools. Both sections displayed a more positive attitude toward children on the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory at the end of their tutoring experiences. However, the section tutoring in the urban schools had greater gains in positive attitude toward children.

Maruyama (1970) described white college students who, as a requirement for a minority groups course, were to establish a personal rapport with the Blacks living in the ghetto. After frequenting the bars, pool halls, bowling alleys and even being accepted into homes, when genuine efforts were made toward involvement by the white students, they reported definite, more positive attitude changes. It appears that contact with children from different ethnic backgrounds gave the students more positive feelings toward the children.

It appears evident that programs for the preparation of teachers should include not only teaching skills and knowledge about children and subject matter but should also have as an adjunct to these courses, information and experiences to form appropriate attitudes toward the children the college students will teach some day. This is especially important for teachers who will teach culturally different children possessing different attitudes and motivations toward learning.

The question this study attempted to answer was, can college students who are prospective elementary school teachers become more positively oriented toward culturally different children after taking the two courses in their teacher preparation program which focus on teaching these children?

## Method

Students enrolled in two undergraduate teacher education courses, one dealing with the characteristics of the culturally different and the second concerned with methods of teaching the culturally different including a practicum experience with various ethnic groups, participated in the project. Two different groups of students were involved in the study. One group (group A) was enrolled in summer school at Iowa State University and were enrolled in the two courses simultaneously. Little contact with culturally different children was provided because of a paucity of available summer programs for the culturally different. The other group (group B) took the two courses consecutively the following fall and winter quarters at Iowa State University and were provided with numerous opportunities to work with culturally different children. The composition of both of these groups was similar in that the students in both groups were undergraduate, elementary education students. None of the summer school students were experienced teachers.

An opinionnaire was constructed using statements which the authors viewed as exhibiting levels of information and/or levels of prejudice. These items were submitted to a panel of five judges (university faculty members) and those items which had total judge-agreement as to (1) type of item, information or prejudice and (2) direction of desired change in information or prejudice, were retained for analysis for the measuring instrument. The thirty-three item opinionnaire was presented to groups A and B prior to instruction in each instructional time period and again at the end. The students were provided class time to respond to the opinionnaire and were told only that the instructor was in the process of standardizing a measuring device for future use. The same instructor taught all the courses.

## Results

The presentation of the results shall take the following format. First, those items where a statistically significant change ($p<.10$) occurred between the pretest means (test given the first day of class) and the posttest means (given the last day of class) will be presented for group A. Group A was the group of 14 students who took the two courses simultaneously but with little or no planned contact with the culturally different child provided.

Next, a similar format shall be presented for group B. Group B was the group of 17 students who took the two courses consecutively during the fall and winter quarters of instruction and were provided a great deal of planned contact with the culturally different child. Four sets of changes in group means will be considered for this group. First, those significant changes occurring the first quarter of instruction. Next, those significant changes occurring the second quarter of instruction, then those items which showed

significant change the first quarter and how they faced the second quarter, and finally those items showing significant changes over the two quarter sequence.

Group A - Attitude Change

Table I presents the class averages on a 9 point scale with 4 being a neutral attitude. (Note the original scoring values were converted to the following scale for convenience and computer tabulation. The stronger attitudes were accorded stronger weights. This awards more strength to those with definitive attitudes and less to those attitudes vacilating in the middle. This is consistent with the work of Warren, etc. as presented in The Certainty Method , Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Iowa State University, Rural Sociology Report No. 82, 1969.)

| Attitude | Score |
|---|---|
| I agree very much. | 8 |
| I agree pretty much. | 6 |
| I agree a little. | 5 |
| I am uncertain. | 4 |
| I disagree a little. | 3 |
| I disagree pretty much. | 2 |
| I disagree very much. | 0 |

Only those items where a statistically significant change ($p \leq .10$) occurred are reported. Table I also reports the standard deviations and the correlated t value for each item.

(Table I appears here)

These items which the judges classified as information items had the following changes:

Increase in Means

Obedience and respect for authority and for the law are the most important virtues children should learn.
Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives.

Decrease in Means

Low-class youngsters tend to place more emphasis on "belonging to a gang" than does the middle class youngster.

Table I

Pre & Post Test Means On Items Where
A Significant Change Occurred For Group A.

(N=14)

| Item | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Diff. in Mean | t value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| Obedience and respect for authority & for the law are the most important virtues children should learn. | 3.35 | 1.90 | 2.21 | 2.48 | -1.14 | 2.28 |
| I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person. | 2.57 | 2.76 | 3.85 | 2.44 | +1.28 | 2.86 |
| Race mixture produces biologically inferior offspring. | .64 | 1.44 | 1.64 | 2.20 | +1.00 | 2.25 |
| Pure-blooded members of a race are superior in native ability to half-breeds. | .78 | 1.76 | 1.85 | 1.74 | +1.07 | 2.26 |
| Even if all racial groups had equal environments, it is not very probably that their average mental accomplishments would also be equalized. | 2.14 | 2.90 | 4.21 | 2.69 | +2.07 | 1.95 |
| Low-class youngsters tend to place more emphasis on "belonging to a gang" than does the middle class youngster. | 3.92 | 2.16 | 6.14 | 1.09 | +2.22 | 3.18 |
| Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives. | 6.85 | 1.70 | 5.50 | 1.87 | -1.35 | 3.09 |
| In America the best teachers of the culturally different tend to come from that culture. | 4.07 | 2.16 | 5.28 | 1.85 | +1.21 | 2.36 |

In America the best teachers of the culturally different tend to come from that culture.

These items which the judges classified as prejudice items had the following changes:

Increase in Means

I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person.
Race mixture produces biologically inferior offspring.
Pure-blooded members of a race are superior in native ability to half-breeds.
Even if all racial groups had equal environments, it is not very probable that their average mental accomplishments would also be equalized.

(The reader is cautioned at this point to not necessarily interpret an increase in means as an increase in information or prejudice since some items were stated in reverse polarity. All changes will be discussed in the discussion section to follow.)

Group B - Attitude Change

Table II presents the class averages, standard deviations and correlated t values for those items where a statistically significant change occurred for group B during the first quarter of instruction.

(Table II appears here)

- Information items and their accompanying changes were as follows:

Increase in Means

Low-class youngsters tend to place more emphasis on "belonging to a gang" than does the middle class youngster.

Decrease in Means

Obedience and respect for authority and for the law are the most important virtues children should learn.
Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives.

- Prejudice items and their accompanying changes were:

Increase in Means

I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person.
Culturally, the colored races are superior to the white race in many important aspects.

Table II

First Quarter Pre & Post Test Means

On Items Where A Significant Change

Occurred For Group B.

(N=17)

| Item | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Diff. in Mean | t value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| Obedience and respect for authority & for the law are the most important virtues children should learn. | 3.05 | 2.01 | 1.82 | 1.77 | -1.23 | 2.35 |
| I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person. | 2.00 | 2.03 | 2.76 | 2.56 | + .76 | 1.97 |
| Culturally, the colored races are superior to the white races in many important aspects. | 3.11 | 2.42 | 4.00 | 2.12 | + .89 | 1.98 |
| Low-class youngsters tend to place more emphasis on "belonging to a gang" than does the middle class youngster. | 3.11 | 2.34 | 4.94 | 2.13 | +1.83 | 2.63 |
| Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives. | 6.29 | 1.96 | 5.35 | 1.22 | - .94 | 1.87 |

Decrease in Means

None.

Table III presents the same type of information for group B but deals only with those items where a statistically significant change occurred during the second quarter of instruction.

(Table III appears here)

- Information items and their accompanying changes were:

Increase in Means

There is no scientific reason whatsoever to make our immigration laws stricter for one people than another.
Fate seems to play a more important role in one's life than it did some years ago.
Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives.
Helping the disadvantaged child to be more successful in his school work is the most important job a teacher can perform.

Decrease in Means

None.

- Prejudice items and their accompanying changes were:

Increase in Means

None.

Decrease in Means

There are some racial groups of man who genes are mutually incompatible as far as intermarriage is concerned.

(Insert Table IV)

Table IV reveals that of the five items where significant changes occurred the first quarter in the desired direction only one - Prejudice deserve more treatment in our education system than it usually receives - continued to exhibit a significant change for the second quarter. It is however encouraging to note that even though no significant gains were made on the remaining 4 items, none of these items exhibited a loss in level of mean scores to the original pre-test level. Hence desired attitude changes appears to be retained the second quarter

Table III

Second Quarter Pre & Post Test Means

On Items Where A Significant Change

Occurred For Group B.

(N=17)

| Item | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Diff. in | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | Mean | value |
| There is no scientific reason whatsoever to make our immigration laws stricter for one people than for another. | 4.88 | 2.36 | 6.88 | 2.23 | +2.00 | 2.47 |
| There are some racial groups of man whose genes are mutually incompatible as far as intermarriage is concerned. | 1.00 | 1.73 | .23 | .66 | - .77 | 1.84 |
| Fate seems to play a more important role in one's life than it did some years ago. | 1.88 | 1.72 | 2.82 | 1.87 | + .94 | 1.84 |
| Prejudice deserves more treatment in our education system than it usually receives. | 5.35 | 1.22 | 6.41 | 1.32 | +1.06 | 2.50 |
| Helping the disadvantaged child to be more successful in his school work is the most important job a teacher can perform. | 3.29 | 2.99 | 5.58 | 2.64 | +2.29 | 2.68 |

Table IV

Second Quarter Pre & Post Test Means

On Items Where A Significant Change

Occurred For Group B.

(N=17)

| Item | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Diff. in Mean | t value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| ...edience and respect for authority & ...r the law are the most important virtues children should learn. | 1.82 | 1.77 | 2.53 | 2.27 | + .71 | 1.59 |
| I can hardly imagine my best friend ...arrying a minority person. | 2.76 | 2.56 | 2.29 | 2.33 | - .47 | - .93 |
| Culturally, the colored races are superior to the white races in many important aspects. | 4.00 | 2.12 | 3.71 | 3.57 | - .29 | - .35 |
| Low-class youngsters tend to place ...ore emphasis on "belonging to a gang" ...han does the middle class youngster. | 4.94 | 2.13 | 4.12 | 2.62 | -.82 | -1.48 |
| Prejudice deserves more treatment in ...ur education system than it usually ...receives. | 5.35 | 1.22 | 6.41 | 1.32 | +1.06 | 2.50 |

of the experiment as measured by these items.

Table V deals with those items for group B where a statistically significant change occurred over the two quarter sequence.

(Table V appears here)

- Information items and their accompanying changes were:

Increase in Means

Helping the disadvantaged child to be more successful in his school work is the most important job a teacher can perform.

Decrease in Means

None.

- Prejudice items and their accompanying changes were:

Increase in Means

None.

Decrease in Means

It would be a mistake generally to have Negroes as foremen, administration, or political leaders over the white majority in America.
There are some racial groups of man whose genes are mutually incompatible as far as intermarriage is concerned.
Dependence on social welfare is becoming a way of life for far too many people in America.

## Discussion

Focusing on the prejudice items for group A, it appears to the authors that the students in this group actually increased in the amount of prejudice they expressed. Questions where a significant increase occurred such as

I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person.
Race mixture produces biologically inferior offspring.
Pure-blooded members of a race are superior in native ability to half-breeds.
Even if all racial groups had equal environments, it is not very probable that their average mental accomplishments would also be equalized.

Table V

Two Quarter Pre & Post Test Means

On Items Where A Significant Change

Occurred For Group B

(N=17)

| Item | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Diff. in Mean | t value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | |
| It would be a mistake generally to have Negroes as foremen, administration, or political leaders over the white majority in America. | 1.81 | 2.00 | .37 | .80 | -1.44 | 2.88 |
| There are some racial groups of man whose genes are mutually incompatible as far as intermarriage is concerned. | 1.05 | 1.60 | .23 | .66 | - .82 | 2.13 |
| Helping the disadvantaged child to be more successful in his school work is the most important job a teacher can perform. | 3.00 | 1.93 | 5.58 | 2.64 | +2.58 | 3.56 |
| Dependence on social welfare is becoming a way of life for far too many people in America. | 5.11 | 2.08 | 4.00 | 2.26 | -1.11 | 3.00 |

reveal that this group of students who had no planned contact with culturally different children increased in their prejudice toward races other than their own.

The accompanying prejudice change for group B is not nearly so pronounced with only one item revealing an increase in prejudice - I can hardly imagine my best friend marrying a minority person - and one exhibiting a corresponding decrease in means revealing a decrease in prejudice - culturally, the colored races are superior to the white races in many important aspects.

It then appears that planned contact with culturally different children even over a short time span such as one quarter of instruction (9 weeks) can help to reduce the prejudice of a prospective teacher.

This conclusion is even more reinforced when one considers what happened the second quarter with group B, noting a reduction of prejudice in one item - there are some racial groups of man whose genes are mutually incompatible as far as intermarriage is concerned.

Looking at the total two quarter sequence when taught consecutively it becomes quite apparent that the amount of prejudice revealed by the class moves downward.

It is distressing to the authors to find so few informational items with a significant increase in the concurrent or consecutive sequence. A safe conjecture is that the informational items in the test did not correspond to the information provided within the courses.

If an instructor of university students wants to tear down walls of prejudice within his students toward culturally different children, then this study reinforces the fact that he must:

First, provide and plan for extensive student contact with culturally different children and

Second, allow that contact to continue as long as possible (two quarters as opposed to one, etc.)

This study has reverified that attitudes toward culturally different children can be changed but only through having contact with such children not just through intellectual discussion and reading.

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